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SUBJECT Espionage

DAN RATHER: New developments tonight on the international spying front and the complicated web running East to West and back again.

Defense Department correspondent David Martin reports this evening the United States has new evidence that Vitaly Yurchenko, the high-ranking KGB man who defected to the United States, then redefected to Russia, was the genuine article, not a KGB plant. How does the United States think it knows this? The newest KGB defector, Viktor Gundurov (?), says so. Correspondent Martin has been told by a Reagan Administration source that Gundurov, now hiding out in this country, says he served in the same KGB unit as Yurchenko.

Gundurov is one of three Soviet intelligence officers to defect recently in Athens, and they are said to figure into yet another web of intrigue, this one in London today. There, a retired U.S. Navy commander who once worked in a highly classified unit developing submarine tactics to be used against the Soviets, John Bothwell, was charged with espionage. Sources told correspondent David Martin that Bothwell, now revealed to be a spy for the Russians, once also worked for the CIA in Athens.

Now, in the shockingly long list of recent cases uncovered of spying against the United States, another new shock tonight. And Rita Braver has been investigating that one.

RITA BRAVER: U.S. officials say that Larry Wu-Tai Chin, a former CIA analyst convicted two weeks ago of spying for Communist China, put a plastic bag over his head today and killed himself. The Justice Department sent an investigating team to the Virginia prison where it happened, trying to assess if a

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closer watch should have been kept on the man the U.S. hoped would provide valuable information about Chinese espionage techniques.

Ever since his arrest last November, Chin had claimed that he had merely been trying to improve relations between China, where he was born, and the U.S., where he'd become a citizen.

LARRY WU-TAI CHIN: When your father and mother were fighting, which side would you stand for. You do not want to stand on any side, but you want them to reconcile.

BRAVER: The FBI said Chin began giving information to the Chinese during the Korean War, when he worked for the U.S. Army. But Chin claimed he first began passing classified documents in 1970, when he had access to information proving that President Nixon was serious about making friends with the Chinese. In fact, Chin took credit for the U.S.-China thaw.

CHIN: My information was taken so seriously by the leadership of China and was so -- attached so much great importance. And, of course, it's foreign policy and its domestic policy would be adopted in a way corresponding to what I provided.

BRAVER: But the government rejected Chin's claim, saying that money was his motive. He liked playing the Las Vegas casinos and buying up real estate with \$180,000 he got from the Chinese.

He was facing a life sentence. But in this interview just three days ago, Chin told CBS correspondent Charlie Rose he was not afraid of prison.

CHIN: Being in jail for the balance of my life doesn't scare me at all, in view of the contribution I made to the two countries.

BRAVER: But he apparently changed his mind.

No suicide notes have been found, making Chin a man as puzzling in death as he was in life.